



St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School

Admissions Policy

Admission Arrangements for 1 September 2026 – 31 August 2027

The Governing Body of the school is responsible for deciding admissions to the school but works closely with the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to co-ordinate admissions.

St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School has a distinctive Christian ethos which is at the centre of school life. We provide an inclusive, supportive and caring environment, shaped by Christian values in which children can learn and flourish. We welcome applications from all members of the community without reference to ability or aptitude, and irrespective of whether they are of the Christian faith, another faith or no faith, but we expect parents to respect the Christian ethos of our school and its importance to the whole school community.

The governors have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation, including that on infant class sizes and equal opportunities.

Application Forms and Offers of a Place

Applications for entry to St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School in September 2026 must be made on the Common Application Form (CAF) which can be found on the website of the Local Authority (LA) in which the parent (**see note 1**) lives, which may or may not be Oxfordshire and returned to that LA. The Oxfordshire form is available on-line or directly from the OCC Schools Admissions Team, County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND.

All applications will be treated equally, irrespective of need or ability.

The dates for offers of a place will conform to the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. Applications received after the deadline for receipt will only be considered after all those received by the deadline. This means that, if no places are left after considering all the applications received by the deadline, even if you fulfil a higher criterion than that under which places have been offered to other applicants, you will be unsuccessful.

It is not to be assumed that if a child is attending a local pre-school provider in the catchment area, that the child will automatically transfer to St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School. You must apply to the relevant LA for a place in the normal way under the co-ordinated scheme.

At St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School, pupils will be offered a full-time place to start in the September of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday. Parents whose children were born between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022 may apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2026. There are 45 places available. We will not accept any applications for children who will not reach compulsory school age within that school year.

In line with Government policy, the OCC guidelines state that the statutory school age, whereby all children must be in full-time education, is the start of the term (September, January or April) after their fifth birthday and that remains the same.

Parents of a child whose fifth birthday falls between 1 September 2026 and 31 March 2027 may defer entry until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term beginning in January, or April after their fifth birthday). The school will hold the deferred place for the child, (provided it is taken up during the school year 2026-2027), although, **in the majority of cases, the school finds that children benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.**

For children whose fifth birthday falls between 1 April 2027 and 31 August 2027 (Summer born children), who do not reach compulsory school age until September 2027, Parents who do not wish them to start in school year 2026-2027 but to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2027, should proceed as follows:

They should apply at the usual time for a place in September 2026 together with a written request that the child is admitted outside his or her normal age group to the Reception year in September 2027.

NB: Parents would need to provide supporting evidence/reasons for seeking a place outside the normal age group and should discuss the position with the Headteacher as early as possible. The school will consider the request carefully and if it is agreed, this should be clear before the national offer day of 17 April 2026, their application for the normal age group will be withdrawn before any place is offered. They should then reapply in the normal way (no later than 15 January 2027) for a Reception place in September 2027. If their request is refused, the parents must decide whether to wait for any other offer of a place in September 2027. (NB: It will still be subject to the oversubscription criteria below) or to withdraw their application and apply in the second half of the summer term 2027 for a Year 1 place in September 2027. Parents should be aware that the Year 1 group may have no vacancies and it could be full with children transferring from the 2026-2027 Reception Year group.

NB: Agreement by the school in 2026 to defer does not guarantee a place in September 2027 – the normal over subscription criteria applies.

Until the child reaches compulsory school age, he or she may attend part-time. If parents wish to exercise this right, they should discuss detailed arrangements with the Headteacher.

Parents (**see note 1**) wishing to apply for the Reception/Foundation Year in September 2026 must complete the Common Application Form (CAF) provided by their home local authority (LA). The home LA is the LA in whose area the parents live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to the LA no later than **15 January 2026**. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered **after** all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be posted by the home LA on 17 April 2026.

The intake group has 30 places. The admission number of 30 reflects the net capacity of the school. The number of admissions intended for the year commencing 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027 is 30. There are 30 places available in each year throughout the school. It will be increased if it is necessary to accommodate multiple births.

The school catchment area is considered to be the Chipping Norton Parish Boundary, which includes Chipping Norton, Over Norton and Heythrop. A map illustrating the catchment area can be viewed at the end of this document and in the school office.

Over Subscription Criteria

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Need or with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School will always be offered places. If there are fewer applications than places available, all children will be offered places. If there is a greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

- (a) Children who are “Looked-after children” (LAC) by the Local Authority within the meaning of Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989 at the time of their application, and all “previously looked after (PLAC), include those who appear to this Admission Authority to have been in care outside England (IAPLAC) and ceased to be in state care having been adopted. Evidence of the previously looked after status and/or the adoption will be requested.

NB: “By a “looked-after child” we mean one in the care of the local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function. Previously looked after children are children who have been adopted subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders. Adopted children are those for whom an adoption order is made under the Adoption Act 1976 (s.12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (s.46). A “child arrangements order” is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, s.8 as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, s.14). A “special guardianship order” is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child’s special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, s.14A). Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (eg a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order). Evidence that a child from outside England was previously in state care will be required to come within this criterion. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.”

- (b) Children (or a parent) who have exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that they attend St Mary’s School rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family. (**See note 4**)
- (c) A child with a normal home address (**see note 2**) in the catchment area and with a sibling (**see note 3**) already on roll at St Mary’s C of E (Aided) Primary School at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to school.
- (d) A child with a normal home address (**see note 2**) in the catchment area of St Mary’s C of E (Aided) Primary School at the time of application.
- (e) A child with a normal home address (**see note 2**) outside the catchment area and with a sibling (**see note 3**) already on roll at St Mary’s C of E (Aided) Primary School at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to school.
- (f) A child with a normal home address (**see note 2**) outside the catchment area of St Mary’s C of E (Aided) Primary School at the time of application.
- (g) Other children.

Proximity of the child’s home to school as the nearest designated public route as defined on the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Directorate for Children, Education and Families (CEF) Geographical Information System, with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will also serve to differentiate between pupils in criteria (a) to (g) if the need arises.

In the unlikely event of a case where the measurement of distance “tie break” produces an identical measurement for two or more applicants, including multiple births, the school will defer to the random

selection process as described in the OCC admissions code under “Measuring home to School Distance” (**Note 5**). The LA will act as adjudicator and will implement this as an independent body. The final decision of an offer or refusal of a place rests with the Governing Body of St Mary’s C of E (Aided) Primary School.

All Other Admissions

Applications for other than main entry years will be treated in accordance with this Admissions Policy ie. if there are vacancies, your child will be ranked in order of criteria and offered a place if there is one in that particular year available. If there are no vacancies in the requested year, your child’s name will be placed on a continued interest list and ranked in accordance with the admissions criteria and will be offered a place if one becomes available. Applications must be made directly to the school but also on-line via the OCC Admissions as we are signed up to the voluntary co-ordination arrangements with the Local Authority.

If there is a vacancy and there is no child on the relevant waiting list with a higher priority (according to over-subscription criteria (a) to (g) above), a place will be offered.

In-Year admissions or admissions at the beginning of the school years other than Reception will only be considered by the Governing Body up to the half term (using a three-term year) in advance of the desired date for entry. For example, for entry in January, the application will not be considered until after the half term break.

The school adheres to the published Scheme of Co-ordination issued by OCC. In-year applications for all year groups will be administered by the school. The school will immediately inform the LA of any in-year admissions in accordance with the scheme.

If parents are moving to a new house, the school will ask for evidence of the move when considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor’s letter to confirm exchange of contracts, or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required (Armed Forces Personnel are exempt). If you are returning from elsewhere, to live in a home that you own, we will require evidence to show that you have returned. We will also ask for evidence that any previous house owned has been sold or is being sold. We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care agreement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

Vulnerable / Hard to place children “In-Year Admissions”

There is an established protocol which is followed by St Mary’s C of E (Aided) Primary School for in-year admissions of vulnerable children, Years F1 to Year 6 inclusive (referred to in the school admissions guidance “Starting School” as “In-Year Fair Access”).

Applications for admission to a year group other than that indicated by the child’s age

Any requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully eg. gifted and talented children (Able, Interested and motivated – AIM) or those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances. However, cases will not normally be agreed without a consensus that, to do so, would be in the pupil’s interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the Headteacher in advance of applying for a place. The Governors will ask relevant professionals for their opinion on the case. It should be noted that if a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.

Continued Interest (Waiting List)

The school maintains a waiting list for those children not offered a place and the parents ask for their child's name to be added to the waiting list. In the event of over-subscription, the Scheme of Co-ordination covers the way in which continued interest lists will operate ie. they will be kept for the whole of F1. The school will periodically seek confirmation that parents wish a child to be kept on the continued interest list.

Multiple Births

In cases where there is one place available and the next child on the list is a twin, triplet, etc., we would admit both twins (and all children in the case of other multiple births) even if this meant exceeding the agreed admission number of 45.

Fair Access

The school participates in OCC Fair Access Protocol. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place even if there are no places available in the relevant year group and take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

<https://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/school-organisation-and-planning/school-admissions>

Appeals

There are established arrangements for appeals against non-admission. Details are available from the school, including the date by which an appeal should be submitted. It must be noted that, in the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the school, the school does not consider any further application in the same academic (school) year ie 1 September to 31 August, unless there has been a material change in circumstances eg. a change of address which results in a move from outside the catchment area to inside it.

Parents who wish their children to attend the school are most welcome to visit. Arrangements can be made through the School Business Manager who deals with school admissions at St Mary's.

Admissions in September 2024

For entry into Reception year in 2024/2025 the school received 23 applications. 23 offers were made. The criteria applied to the applications were as follows (please follow the link)

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/schools/list/3858>

Select the document – Place Allocations for this information.

All the children in category (a) to (g) were offered places. There were no unsuccessful applicants.

Home to School Transport

Information regarding Home to School Transport can be found in the OCC website,

For further information or a school registration form, please contact: -

Mrs Anne Strick

St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School

The Green

Chipping Norton

Oxfordshire

OX7 5DH

Tel: 01608-642673

Note 1

By parent we mean any person who has parental responsibility for or is the legal guardian of the child. "Parent" is defined in law (The Education Act 1996) as either:

- (a) any person who has parental responsibility (defined in the Children Act 1989) for the child or young person; or
- (b) any person who has care of the child or young person

If you are in any doubt, please contact the school office.

Note 2

By normal home address, we mean your child's home address. This must be where parent or legal carers of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child's parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of the week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends most of the school week. Where there is an equal an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgement about which address to use for the purposes of determining whether or not, to offer a place. We will consider, for example, the following:

- Any legal documentation confirming residence
- The pattern of the residence
- The period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- Confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- Where the child is registered with his or her GP
- Any other evidence the Parents may supply to verify the position.

The school reserves the right to check the validity of the address given by asking for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV Licence, Buildings and Contents Insurance, Mortgage Statement or Rent Book confirming the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that places are not obtained at the school based on a false address and, in case of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (eg. false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started school.

We regard a child's home address to be where the child sleeps for the majority of the time during the school week (Monday to Friday). We may ask to see official documentation such as; a Child Benefit Statement/Book or Medical Card if there are reasons why a child does not reside at his or her parent/s

address. For example, if he or she is resident with a Grandparent. This needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared or a relative's address is used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are not sufficient reason for listing another address.

If parents move to a new house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the home LA must be informed.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move when considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme.

We would not accept an address where one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered temporary. Nor would we accept as address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care agreement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

There are special arrangements for families of service personnel with a confirmed posting or crown servants returning from overseas. If the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date, and there is a place available, it will be offered even though there is not an intended address, or the family is not yet living in the area.

Note 3

By sibling we mean a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step-brother or sister or the child of the parent/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. It is helpful if Parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

Note 4

When applying under criterion (b) exceptional medical or social needs, you must include supporting evidence from an independent professional person who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for preferring St Mary's School. This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the school is the most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused if your child had to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, health visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of your child's or your own case. The school reserves the right to ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate educational professionals where necessary.

Note 5

OCC Geographical Information System*

"Shortest designated route" This is measured from the same start point defined in the straight-line distance measuring rules (see above*). From the start point the route firstly connects to the nearest point of the digitised network. The digitised network is constructed from road data supplied by Ordnance Survey called the Integrated Transport Network (ITN).

The Integrated Transport Network has been accurately digitised to measure along the centre of roads and takes corners at right angles. This is the same underlying information used by internet-based mapping

solutions (e.g. Google Maps). However, the LA has a more accurate start point than internet-based mapping solutions and the ITN has been augmented by the LA to take into account other available public routes (e.g. alleyways, public footpaths, bridleways, etc). The augmented ITN used by the LA is accurate to at least 1 metre. All 548,000 kilometres of roads in Great Britain are accurately mapped in a consistent and logical network. The network does not include routes that are not defined as public; these include crossing parks with no paths where the park is not open and available all the time, “short-cuts” across patches of open land without paths, or footpaths across private land which are not defined by Ordnance Survey as public routes.

The end point of the route is the nearest open gate of the school first arrived at from the direction of travel that is officially available for use by students for entry and exit to the school site at the start and end of the school day. The location of these gates has been set by the Admissions Authority. The LA consults with each individual school annually to ensure accurate placement of gates and their availability for use. The shortest safe route is established using an algorithm within the bespoke software used by the LA. This software is called “RouteFinder” and is produced by Higher Mapping Solutions (www.highermappingsolutions.com). This programme integrates with the LA’s database (ONE) which is supplied by Capita Children’s Services (www.capitaeducationsoftware.co.uk).

“RouteFinder” measures in kilometres and the measurement is converted into miles accurate to three decimal places, which gives an accurate reading up to 1.609344 metres. The shortest designated route is not necessarily a driving route because it may use, in whole or in part, a non-driveable route (e.g. footpaths).

The shortest designated route is also not necessarily a walking route because, for example, where the measurement uses a road, the route is along the centre of the road not along the edge (pavement or equivalent) of the road. Other measuring systems may give a different measurement, but the LA cannot take a measurement from another measuring system into account because this would lead to inconsistency in the method used to measure the shortest designated route and would constitute maladministration of the admissions process.

For addresses which are outside the digitised network (approximately 6 miles outside Oxfordshire’s county boundary) an internet mapping solution will be used. For addresses in Europe, ‘Directions’ in google.co.uk/maps will be used.

For addresses outside Europe the straight-line distance using the same websites and method set out above will be used.

St Mary’s Catchment

